

# **GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE TRANSPORT OF ANIMALS BY SEA**

## **Article 1**

### **Responsibilities**

Once the decision to transport animals by sea has been made, the welfare of animals during their transport is paramount and is the joint responsibility of all people involved.

The management of animals at post-discharge facilities is outside the scope of this document.

The roles of each of those responsible are defined below:

- Exporters, owners and managers of animals are responsible for the general health of the animals and their fitness for the journey. The exporter is responsible for ensuring compliance of the animals with the veterinary certification and other documentation of the importing and exporting countries.
- Business or buying/selling agents have a joint responsibility with owners for the selection of animals that are fit to travel. They have a joint responsibility with masters of vessels and managers of facilities at the start and at the end of the journey for the availability of suitable facilities for the assembly, loading, transport, unloading and holding of animals, and for emergencies.
- Animal handlers have a personal responsibility for the humane handling and care of animals, especially during loading and unloading. To carry out these responsibilities, they should be competent in these procedures.
- The exporter, the shipping company and the master of the vessel are responsible for planning the journey to ensure the care of the animals, including:
  - choosing appropriate vessels and ensuring that competent animal handlers are available for loading and caring for animals throughout the journey,
  - developing and keeping up to date contingency plans to address emergencies (including adverse weather conditions) and minimise stress during transport,
  - correct loading of the ship, regular inspections during the journey and for appropriate responses to problems arising.
- To carry out these responsibilities, staff should be competent regarding transport regulations, equipment usage, humane handling and the care of animals.
- Managers of facilities during loading of the animals are responsible for:
  - providing suitable premises for loading the animals?
  - providing competent animal handlers to load the animals in a manner that causes minimum stress and injury,
  - providing appropriate facilities for emergencies,
  - providing facilities and veterinarians or competent animal handlers capable of performing euthanasia or urgent slaughter when required,

- Managers of facilities at the end of the journey are responsible for:
  - providing suitable facilities for unloading the animals onto transport vehicles for immediate movement or securely holding the animals in lairage, with shelter, water and feed, when required, for transit,
  - providing competent animal handlers to unload the animals with minimum stress and injury,
  - minimising the opportunities for disease transmission while the animals are in the facilities,
  - providing appropriate facilities for emergencies,
  - providing facilities and veterinarians or competent animal handlers capable of performing euthanasia or urgent slaughter when required.
- The responsibilities of the *veterinary services* of the exporting country include:
  - establishing minimum standards for animal welfare, including requirements for inspection of animals before and during their travel, and for certification and record keeping,
  - approving facilities, containers and vessels for the holding and transport of animals,
  - setting competence standards for animal handlers and managers,
  - implementation of the standards, including through accreditation of / interaction with other organisations and competent authorities,
  - monitoring and evaluating health and welfare performance, including the use of any veterinary medications.
- The responsibilities of the *veterinary services* of the importing country include:
  - establishing minimum standards for animal welfare, including requirements for inspection of animals after their travel, and for certification and record keeping,
  - approving facilities, containers and vehicles for the unloading, holding and transport of animals,
  - setting competence standards for animal handlers and managers,
  - implementation of the standards, including through accreditation of / interaction with other organisations and competent authorities,
  - ensuring that the vessels transporting animals meet the required standards?
  - monitoring and evaluating health and welfare performance, including the use of any veterinary medications.
- Private veterinarians and para-professionals involved in transporting animals and the associated handling procedures should receive specialist training.

## **Article 2**

### **Training**

- All people handling animals or who are otherwise responsible for animals during journeys, should receive adequate training according to their responsibilities listed in Article 4.
- Training should address:
  - animal behaviour, physiology, general signs of disease, and indicators of poor animal welfare such as stress, pain and fatigue,
  - transport regulations,
  - methods of animal handling during transport and associated activities such as assembling, loading, and unloading,
  - methods of inspecting animals, managing situations frequently encountered during transport such as adverse weather conditions, and dealing with emergencies,
  - species-specific aspects of animal handling and care, whenever necessary,
  - appropriate record keeping, and journey log.

## **Article 3**

### **Documentation**

- Animals should not be loaded until the documentation required to that point is complete.
- The documentation accompanying the consignment should include:
  - journey travel plan,
  - date and place of loading,
  - daily record of inspection and important events (the journey log) which includes records of mortality, temperature, food and water consumed, medication provided, mechanical defects,
  - date and place of arrival and unloading,
  - veterinary certification, when required,
  - animal identification to allow traceback of individual animals to the premises of departure, and where possible to the premises of origin,
  - details of animals at risk,
  - number of animal handlers on board,
  - stocking density estimate for each load in the consignment.
- Veterinary certification should be required to accompany consignments of animals and address:
  - cleaning and disinfection,
  - fitness to travel,
  - animal identification (description, number, etc.),
  - health status including tests, treatment and vaccinations, if required.

## Article 4

### Planning the journey

#### General

- Adequate planning is a key factor affecting the welfare of animals during a journey.
- Before initiation of travel, plans should be made in relation to:
  - type of transport vessel required,
  - route, taking into account distance, expected weather and sea conditions and
  - duration of journey
  - mixing of animals from different sources in a single consignment,
- Preconditioning may be required, eg for dry food.
- Potential for spread of infectious disease
  - when requested by *Veterinary Authorities* of the importing country, animals should be vaccinated against diseases to which they are likely to be exposed at their destination.
- There should be planning for water and feed availability during the journey. Feed should be of appropriate quality and composition for the species, age, condition of the animals, climatic conditions, etc.
- Extreme weather conditions are hazards for animals undergoing transport and require appropriate vessel design to minimise risks. Special precautions should be taken for animals that have not been acclimatised or which are unsuited to either hot or cold conditions. In some extreme conditions of heat or cold, animals should not be transported at all.
- Behaviour-modifying or other medication should not be used routinely during transport. Such medicines should only be administered when a problem exists in an individual animal, and should be administered by a veterinarian or other person who has been instructed in their use by a veterinarian.

#### Vessel design and maintenance

- Vessels used for the sea transport of animals should be designed, constructed and fitted as appropriate to the species, size and weight of the animals to be transported; special attention should be paid to the avoidance of injury to animals through the use of secure smooth fittings free from sharp protrusions.
- Vessels should be designed to permit thorough cleaning and disinfection, and the management of faeces and urine.
- Vessels should be maintained in good mechanical and structural condition.
- Vessels should have adequate ventilation to meet variations in climate and the needs of the animal species being transported.
- Vessels should be designed so that the faeces or urine from animals on upper levels do not soil animals on lower levels, or their feed or water.

- Stowage of feed and bedding should be carried out in such a way to ensure protection from the elements and sea water
- Suitable bedding, such as straw or wood shavings, may be added to vessel floors to assist absorption of urine and faeces, provide better footing for animals and protect animals (especially young animals) from hard or rough flooring surfaces and adverse weather conditions.
- The above principles apply also to containers used for the transport of animals.

#### **Special provisions for transport in road vehicles on roll-on/roll-off vessels or for containers**

- Road vehicles and containers should be equipped with a sufficient number of adequately designed, positioned and maintained securing points enabling them to be securely fastened to the vessel.
- Road vehicles and containers should be secured to the ship before the start of the sea journey to prevent them being displaced by the motion of the vessel.

#### **Ability to inspect animals en route**

- Animals should be positioned to enable them to be inspected regularly during the journey to ensure their safety and good welfare. The first inspection should be undertaken shortly after departure.
- To allow an adequate inspection of animals en route, it should be possible for each animal to be clearly observed by the animal handler or other responsible person.

#### **Space allowance**

- The number of animals which should be transported on a vessel and their allocation to different pens on the vessel should be determined before loading.
- The amount of space required, including headroom, depends on the species of animal and should allow the necessary thermoregulation. Each animal should be able to assume its natural position for transport (including during loading and unloading) without coming into contact with the roof or upper deck of the vessel. Where animals lie down, they should have the space to adopt a comfortable, normal lying posture.
- Calculations for the space allowance for each animal should be carried out, using the figures given in these guidelines or, in their absence, in a relevant national or international document. The size of pens will affect the number of animals in each.
- The same principles apply when animals are transported in containers.

## Article 5

### Pre-journey period

#### General

- All vessels and containers for animals should be thoroughly cleaned and, if necessary disinfected before animals are loaded.
- Before a journey, animals should be inspected, where possible by a veterinarian.
- In many cases of sea transport, animals may require pre-journey assembly. In these circumstances, the following points should be considered:
  - For animals such as pigs which are susceptible to motion sickness, and in order to reduce urine and faeces production during the journey, a short period of feed deprivation prior to loading is desirable.
  - When animals will be provided with a novel diet or method of water provision during or after transport, an adequate period of pre-exposure is necessary. Preconditioning to the feed to be used on the vessel may be necessary in such cases.
- Before each journey, vessels should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, and when necessary cleaned of arthropod and other parasites for animal and public health purposes, using chemicals approved by the *Veterinary Authority*. When these procedures are necessary during a journey, they should be carried out with the minimum of stress to the animals.

#### Shelter in the holding area

- Holding areas should be designed to:
  - securely contain the animals,
  - maintain a safe environment from hazards, including predators and disease,
  - protect animals from exposure to severe weather conditions, and
  - allow for companionship, rest, watering and feeding.

#### Fitness to travel

- Animals found unfit to travel following inspection by farm staff, animal handlers or veterinarians should not be loaded onto a vessel.
- Humane and effective arrangements should be made by the owner or agent for the handling and care of any animal rejected as unfit to travel.
- Animals that are unfit to travel include:
  - those that are sick, injured, weak, disabled or fatigued,
  - those that are unable to stand unaided and bear weight on each leg,
  - those that are blind in both eyes,
  - those that cannot be moved without causing them additional suffering,
  - newborn with an unhealed navel,
  - females which have given birth with the previous 48 hours,

- pregnant animals which would be in the final 10% of their gestation period at the time of unloading,
- in hot and cold weather, those whose body condition would result in poor welfare.
- Risks during transport can be reduced by selecting animals best suited to the conditions of travel and those that are acclimatised to expected weather conditions.
- Animals at risk and requiring better conditions and additional attention during transport include:
  - very large or obese individuals,
  - very young or old animals,
  - excitable or aggressive animals,
  - animals which have had little contact with humans,
  - females in late pregnancy or heavy lactation,
  - those with a history of exposure to stressors or pathogenic agents prior to transport.
- Hair or wool length needs consideration in relation to the weather conditions expected.

#### **Selection of compatible groups**

- Compatible groups should be selected before transport to avoid adverse animal welfare consequences. The following guidelines should be applied when assembling groups of animals:
  - animals of different species should not be mixed unless they have been reared together for a long period,
  - animals of the same species can be mixed unless there is a significant likelihood of aggression,
  - young or small animals may need to be separated from older or larger animals,
  - animals with horns or antlers should not be mixed with animals lacking horns and antlers,
  - aggressive individuals should be segregated,
  - animals reared together should be maintained as a group; animals with a strong social bond, such as a dam and offspring, should be transported together.

#### **Specific species requirements**

- Recommendations for specific species are described in detail in Appendices XXX.

## **Article 6**

### **Loading**

#### **Experienced supervision**

- Loading should be carefully planned as it has the potential to be the cause of poor welfare in transported animals.
- Loading should be supervised by competent animal handlers with knowledge and experience of the behavioural and physical characteristics of the animal species being loaded. These animal handlers should ensure that animals are loaded quietly and without unnecessary noise, harassment or force, and that untrained assistants or spectators do not impede the process.

#### **Facilities**

- The facilities for loading including the collecting area at the wharf, races and loading ramps should be designed and constructed to take into account of the needs and abilities of the animals with regard to dimensions, slopes, surfaces, absence of sharp projections, flooring, etc.
- All loading facilities should be properly illuminated to allow the animals to be easily inspected by the handler(s), and to allow the animals' ease of movement at all times.

#### **Goads and other aids**

- The following principles should apply:
  - Force should not be used on animals that have little or no room to move.
  - Useful and permitted aids for moving animals include panels, flags, plastic paddles, flappers (a length of cane with a short strap of leather or canvas attached), plastic bags and metallic rattles; they should be used in a manner sufficient to encourage and direct movement of the animals but without physical contact with them.
  - Unsuitable implements such as large wooden sticks, sticks with sharp ends, lengths of metal piping, fencing wire or heavy leather belts should not be used to strike animals.
  - The use of instruments which administer electric shocks (e.g. goads and prods) and their power output should be restricted to that necessary to assist movement of the animals. If such use is necessary, it should be limited to the hindquarters of pigs and large ruminants, and never on sensitive areas such as the eyes, mouth, ears, anogenital region or belly. Such instruments should not be used on horses, sheep and goats of any age, or on calves or piglets.
  - The use of well trained dogs to help with the loading of some species may be acceptable.
  - Manual lifting is permissible for young animals that may have difficulty negotiating ramps, but the grasping or lifting of animals by their wool or hair should not be permitted.



## **Article 7**

### **Travel**

Animal handlers should check the consignment immediately before departure to ensure that the animals have been properly loaded. Each consignment should be checked again early in the journey and adjustments made as appropriate. Periodic checks should be made throughout the journey.

#### **Methods of restraining or containing animals**

- Methods of restraining animals should be appropriate to the species involved and the training of the individual animal.
- Recommendations for specific species are described in detail in Appendices XXX.

#### **Regulating microclimate, including during journey stops**

- Ventilation during the journey should provide for fresh air, the removal of heat and noxious gases. Ventilation should provide for the adequate thermo-regulation of each animal. In some instances, adequate ventilation can be achieved by increasing the space allowance for animals. Likely hotspots should be identified and rectified.
- Animals should be protected against harm from hot or cold conditions during travel. Procedures for maintaining microclimate in vessels will vary between cold and hot, humid conditions but will require similar prevention against the build-up of noxious gases and carbon dioxide.

#### **Sick and injured animals**

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#### **Water and feed requirements**

- Adequate access to suitable feed and water should be provided and due account taken of likely competition for food.
- Further information regarding water and food requirements for different species is available in Appendix XXX.

#### **Emergency procedures - training and authority**

- When euthanasia is necessary, the person responsible for the animals must ensure that it is carried out humanely and results in immediate death. When necessary, assistance should be sought from a veterinarian or other person(s) trained and competent in euthanasia procedures.
- Recommendations for specific species are described in detail in Appendices XXX.

## Article 8

### Unloading and post-journey handling

#### General

- A livestock vessel should have priority attention when arriving in port and have priority access to a berth with suitable unloading facilities.
- The principles of good animal handling during loading apply equally during unloading.
- The accompanying *veterinary certificate* and other documents should meet the requirements of the importing country. Veterinary inspections should be completed as quickly as possible.
- As soon as possible after the ship's arrival at the port and acceptance of the consignment by the Veterinary Authority, animals should be unloaded into appropriate facilities. Sufficient time should be allowed for unloading to proceed efficiently and without unnecessary noise, harassment or force.
- Procedures should be planned and facilities carefully designed to facilitate unloading. All unloading facilities should be properly illuminated to allow the animals' ease of movement at all times.
- Unloading should be supervised by the *Competent Authority* and managed by animal handlers with knowledge and experience of the behavioural and physical characteristics of the species being unloaded.
- In case of emergencies, port facilities should provide animals with appropriate care and comfort, adequate space, access to quality feed and clean drinking water, and shelter from extreme weather conditions.

#### Sick and injured animals

- There should be appropriate facilities and equipment for the humane unloading of animals that are non-ambulatory due to fatigue, injury or sickness. These animals should be unloaded in a manner that causes the least amount of suffering. After unloading, separate pens and other appropriate facilities should be available for sick or injured animals.

#### Special provisions for transport in road vehicles or containers on roll-on/roll-off vessels

- Road vehicles and containers should be equipped with a sufficient number of adequately designed, positioned and maintained securing points enabling them to be securely fastened to the vessel. Road vehicles and containers should be secured to the ship before the start of the sea journey to prevent them being displaced by the motion of the vessel.